

December 2, 2010

Secretary Lester Snow
California Natural Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Westside Yolo Bypass Management Option

Dear Secretary Snow,

The purpose of this letter is to encourage ongoing dialogue between Yolo County and the state resource agencies on all potentially beneficial Yolo Bypass floodplain habitat restoration options, and to encourage continued participation in the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) planning process.

At the Delta Stewardship Council's (Council) November 18, 2010 meeting, the Council's Early Actions Committee (Committee) discussed Yolo County's Yolo Bypass Management Option (Westside Option) Early Action application with the full Council and received testimony from representatives of Yolo County. The Council suggests that the proposed Westside Option may, with further analysis and development, promote the achievement of the coequal goals and many of the policy objectives of the 2009 Delta Reform Act. While the Council is not in a position at the present time to select or promote one conservation measure over another, in the spirit of collaboration and consultation support, the Council encourages serious study of all potentially beneficial actions and alternatives, such as the Westside Option, that seek to enhance the coequal goals and may become part of BDCP and/or the Delta Plan.

Background

The Committee met on November 5, 2010, to discuss and review Interim Plan Early Action applications submitted to the Council for consideration. The Committee reviewed an application, submitted by Yolo County, to help develop the Option. The Committee engaged in substantive discussion with Yolo County Supervisors Mike McGowan and Jim Provenza on the matter.

Yolo County has been engaged in the BDCP planning process through discussions with the Department of Water Resources and the Department of Fish and Game. In their Interim Plan Early Actions application, Yolo County described the major benefits of the Westside Option: significant new seasonal floodplain habitat and improved fish passage, which would benefit

salmonids and splittail while preserving many existing attributes and functions of the bypass. The Westside Option is currently conceptual, but Yolo County believe it may achieve some or all of the biological objectives of the floodplain habitat component of BDCP's Fremont Weir Conservation Measure while avoiding or reducing the potential adverse impacts to agriculture, existing wildlife habitat, and other resources and infrastructure in the Yolo Bypass. Yolo County supports consideration of the Westside Option as an alternative to the Fremont Weir Conservation Measure to achieve floodplain habitat restoration objectives. Studies are necessary to advance the Westside Option development as an alternative and further funding is needed to complete these studies. To provide meaningful input into the BDCP planning process, which is being completed within a stringent schedule, the Westside Option studies should be completed as soon as possible.

Please call me if you would like to discuss this matter further or if I can be of assistance (916) 445-4500.

Sincerely,

P. Joseph Grindstaff, Executive Officer
Delta Stewardship Council

CC:

Director Mark W. Cowin, California Department of Water Resources
Director John McCamman, California Department of Fish and Game
Supervisor Mike McGowan, Yolo County Board of Supervisors
Supervisor Jim Provenza, Yolo County Board of Supervisors
Senior Deputy County Council Phillip Pogledich, Yolo County